

TERRI LYNN LAND, SECRETARY OF STATE
Inaugural Speech
Wednesday, January 1, 2003 12:30 p.m.

Good afternoon. Happy New Year!

Governor Granholm, Lt. Governor Cherry, Attorney General Mike Cox, members of the Court, elected officials and people of the State of Michigan, it is my honor today to assume the office of Secretary of State of Michigan. I would not be here today without the support of my family and those who worked so hard to make this day possible. To my husband, Dan, and our children, Jessica and Nic, thank you for your support and encouragement. To my parents—Paul and Judy Land—thank you for the gift of life and your confidence in me! And to my in-laws, Reverend John and Betty Hibma, thank you for your prayers and support throughout the campaign. To the hundreds of volunteers who logged thousands of hours, thank you! With your help, we were able to spread our message—and our signs—over all of Michigan. And to the citizens of Michigan who have entrusted me with carrying out this office, thank YOU for the faith you have placed in me. I am humbled by your confidence.

I follow in the steps of Candice Miller who brought the office of Secretary of State into the 21st century. I am grateful for her example. As I traveled throughout the state over the past year, I pledged to “keep Michigan driving forward.” Today, as we are here to usher in a new generation of leadership, I renew that pledge. This new generation of leadership comes from outside of Lansing. We have fresh ideas, and a commitment to lay aside our differences and provide good, clean, honest government for the people of Michigan.

Like a business, we need to serve our customers. And like a family, we are engaged in a sacred trust. So our approach to customer service will be business-like. By offering employees the option of flextime, soon the Secretary of State branch offices will offer added hours. As a mom, I know first hand how difficult it can be to get to a Secretary of State’s office during normal business hours. The private sector has responded to our busy lifestyles by offering extended hours. It’s time government did the same. We will also drive Michigan forward by offering more user-friendly services on the Internet. The more customers we have on-line, the fewer customers we will have in line. My policy as Kent County Clerk was to be accessible to people’s concerns. And during my campaign I traveled to every corner of Michigan – from Wayne, Oakland and Macomb to Kalamazoo, Ottawa and Gogebic. We took no area for granted. I will continue and build on that policy this coming year by visiting each and every Secretary of State branch office, listening to the concerns of customers and employees.

Like a family, we are engaged in a sacred trust with Michigan’s voters. In a family, every person counts. In my administration, every vote will count. Our very freedom rests on a fair and accurate election process. I’m proud that Michigan has been the national leader in implementing the Qualified Voter File. We now have the opportunity to improve it. I will work with Michigan’s Congressional delegation and urge them to

take swift action to send already pledged federal funds to Michigan. We will use this money in cooperation with local election officials to upgrade voter systems. We will make the voting process easier and better.

You know, I first ran for County Clerk because fairness was important to me. Everyone should be treated with fairness and respect by government. I will work to make the Secretary of State's office responsive, just as I did in Kent County. I am ready to lead. We are ready to serve. And I will honor the sacred trust that you have placed in me.

Thank you and God bless.